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INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH
AUGUST 16, 2016**

National Veteran suicide statistics¹:

- In 2014, an average of 20 Veterans died from suicide each day.
- In 2014, Veterans accounted for 18% of all deaths from suicide among U.S. adults, while Veterans constituted 8.5% of the U.S. population.
- In 2014, approximately 65% of all Veterans who died from suicide were aged 50 years or older.

Comparing deployment data and suicide data, researchers found deployment is not associated with the rate of suicide. Separation from military service, particularly prior to completing a full enlistment, presented an increased risk for suicide.²

PTSD Incidence³:

- Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans: 11-20%
- Desert Storm/Shield Veterans: 12%
- Vietnam Veterans: 30%

In accordance with HB 19 (83rd Legislature, 2013), the Texas Veterans Commission and the Department of State Health Services coordinate to administer the Veterans Mental Health Program (VMHP). The bulk of the effort is concentrated in the Local Mental Health Authority based Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN).

The 37 MVPN Peer Coordinators across the state, and their trained volunteer peers, provide community based one-on-one peer support, peer support groups, Veteran Treatment Court peer mentoring and community engagement events. Through this rigorous community outreach and engagement, service members, veterans and their families find the camaraderie, trust and support that is critical in combating the loss of hope and the isolation that many face.

MVPN program personnel build close relationships with VA and other clinical mental health providers, as well as community service organizations to create a system of referral and support that addresses the multitude of needs people may face.

In addition to the Peer Network, VMHP provides:

- Military Cultural Competency training for licensed mental health professionals
- Veterans Mental Health awareness training for community-based organizations and faith-based organizations
- Coordination of Justice Involved Veteran programming through engagement, training and cooperation with justice system agencies

¹ VA Suicide Prevention Program, *Facts about Veteran Suicide*, July 2016

² Reger et al, *Risk of Suicide Among US Military Service Members Following Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom Deployment and Separation from the Military*, JAMA Psychiatry, Vol 72, No.6, June 2015.

³ <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/PTSD-overview/basics/how-common-is-ptsd.asp>